

**Religious Education  
Before The Reformation**

**James M. Blakey**



**SOME ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**BEFORE THE REFORMATION**

**GIVING SPECIAL CONSIDERATION TO**

**MONASTICISM**



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**A THESIS**

**By**

**JAMES MUDD BLAKEY, A.B.**

**PHILLIPS UNIVERSITY**

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To

My wife

ALTA ELNORA BLAKEY

Who has inspired me to a  
greater love and appreciation  
of true character, I gratefully  
dedicate this

THESIS



## APPRECIATION

There are many authorities I have to acknowledge as lending me great aid in writing this thesis, but there are a few outside of the authorities that I must acknowledge.

First, I acknowledge my mother for her tender care in training my early life and setting my feet aright and who has gone on to the Heavenly Father this May and awakening in me a greater appreciation for the Heavenly Father.

Second, I acknowledge my father who has carried the burden of the home and toiled with his hands, permitting me to finish my education.

Third, I acknowledge the Faculty of the Bible College who has planted in my tender Christian life the true teachings of Jesus and who has patiently taught me in my endeavor.

Last, I especially acknowledge my Major Professor, Wilfred E. Powell, who has given to me a larger vision of Religious Education and who has toiled patiently and untiringly over this thesis, correcting and improving its rugged edges.



## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to give some of the aspects of Religious Education before the Reformation. There are many things along the line of Religious Education that is not included in this short thesis but enough is given to reveal some of the facts of religion before the great turning point at the time of the Reformation. Religion was not taught very effectively in the early stages of Christianity. Men and women learned from the others about them. Children were not cared for properly. The application of religious principles was not practiced in the methods they used. It is my desire that the reader will make a more thorough study of these early conditions if he is interested in Religious Education; this being only a guide.

I have endeavored to give a brief outline

of the way religion was taught during this period. A sketch of Pre-Christian religious education is given in the first chapter, then the next and following chapters take up the development and stages of Christianity.

May this short work reveal to the reader the actual conditions before the reformation. May it also give to him a desire to investigate for himself and find out more about the subject.



## CONTENTS

	Page
I. Pre-Christian Religious Education.....	1
1. Primitive Man.....	1
2. China.....	2
3. India.....	5
4. Persia.....	6
5. Egypt.....	7
6. Phoenicia.....	8
7. Hebrew.....	9
8. Greece.....	15
9. Rome.....	20
II. Religious Education in the early Christian Church to A.D. 500.....	22
1. Jewish Schools at the time of Jesus.....	22
(a) Methods used.....	26
(b) Adoption by the Christians.....	28
2. Catechumenal Schools.....	31
3. Catechetical Schools.....	39



Monastic Education During the Dark Ages. (To about 1,000).....	53
1. General Characteristics of Monasticism.....	54
2. Eastern Monasticism.....	63
(a) Pre-Christian and Early Christian Monasticism.....	66
(b) Egyptian Monasticism.....	70
(1) The Monasticism of St. Antony.....	70
(2) The Monasticism of St. Pachomius.....	71
(c) Greek Monasticism.....	74
3. Western Monasticism.....	82
(a) Rise and Early Development of the Benedictine Order.....	83
(b) Later Development of the Benedictine Order.....	93
(c) Influence and Work of the Benedictine Order.....	94



V. Monastic Education During the Central Medieval Period. (to about 1300 A.D.).....	101
1. Religious Conditions at the Beginning of the Central Medieval Period.....	101
2. The Franciscans.....	106
3. The Dominicans.....	114
V. Religious Education at the Dawn of the Reformation.....	121
Conclusion.....	132



# I

## PRE-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### The Primitive State of Man

The aim of a primitive people was the satisfaction of immediate wants. The young savage was taught how to provide himself with the necessities of life--food, clothing and shelter. His religion was likewise viewed as a means to the satisfaction of these physical needs. He was to learn how to deal with the unseen. In many cases the medicine man was his interpreter. The religion of the early savage was animism and ancestry worship. As his life was undeveloped, so his religion was crude and superstitious.

A brief look into some of the ancient systems of education will prepare our minds better for the study of religious education in the early period of Christianity. One good



reason for such a brief study is in the fact that the early Christians had to adopt and use systems and methods then in use. Therefore, a glance at these systems will be necessary as a background for a clear understanding of Christian education.

Religion did not start with the Hebrews, forerunners of Christianity. It is said every tribe that has been discovered has possessed some form of religion. Their methods of teaching were of the simplest sort.

"The Chinese and Persians have contributed nothing and the Hindus but little to the development of Western education" (Kemp).

China Altho religion is of Eastern origin, it has not spread because it has failed to teach. How opposite is the religion of the West. Their religion has spread because of the fact that it possessed a missionary zeal. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all



the nations, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you" is the spirit and vision of Western religion. We shall see its spread and influence in a later chapter.

Confucius was one of the great religious educational leaders of the far East. Altho his system was very low and inferior it has served as the foundation of Chinese schools, religion and Government for over 4,000 years. It has been so drilled into their national life that advanced civilization finds it hard to penetrate thru this crust. Confucius formulated a system of laws and moral principles and a body of rites and ceremonies in harmony with it. Because of the disposition of the people the nation adopted it. The nation is organized on its plan. It also has served as the basis of all Chinese learning.

Kemp remarks that the whole school from the first grade to the higher education is



based upon the five classics and four books of Confucius. His sacred books set forth a system of morals described in detail. They recognize five relations which exercise the five fundamental virtues--benevolence, justice, wisdom, politeness and good faith. Three of his precepts are (1) "Do not to others what you would not have done unto you." (2) When you see the right, do it; when you know you are wrong correct it. (3) Kindness must be repaid not injury." The sacred literature passes by the relation of man to his Maker. The system does not recognize a living God and controller of the Universe. Man is not educated for his own sake. Women are not taught at all and not one man in twenty can read. The system has failed in its moral results. The study of the morals is for social distinction and not for betterment of mankind.

India has developed a state system of educa-



tion financed in part or whole from the state treasury. Mission schools have accomplished a great work and are very influential, India but the largest part of the life of India is still Hindu. The religions, doctrines and practices embrace the whole social system. The main portion of their literature taught is sacred; and none is free from religious conceptions. In elementary schools there are religious exercises, hymns and prayers three times a day. The higher education is very extensive and embraces sacred literature. Caste is taught in connection with religion. Even, today, the old idea of caste, man as a part of the machine without individuality, and Hindu worship predominate over all external influences which have been carried into this country.

Persia was different in some ways from the rest of the East. They cultivated little educa-

tion. There was no national system as in India and no laws like the Chinese. The Persians had a higher ethical value, than those of any other ancient people, with the exception of the Jews. They were an outgrowth of the Aryan Nature Worship. This was a kind of spiritualization of the old notion concerning the conflict of Light and Darkness. Their religion is called Zoroasterism after its founder Zoroaster, who lived 2,000 years before Christ. They taught one Supreme God, all knowing, as Creator and Sustainer. Opposed to him was an evil one Ahriman. The priests instructed the boys orally in the tenets of their religion.

I believe this was the most favorable place for Hebrewism to have originated. Laurie states that the Persians had no image of gods, nor temples, nor altars, and considered the use of them a sign of folly. The religious idea



was the ultimate expression of the national life. It was ethical and free from idolatry.

Egypt influenced Christianity only in an indirect way. The religion of Jehovah, it may be stated, was taken into Egypt three distinct times: First, with the visit of the Children of Israel, second, in the first century of Christianity, and Third, in the third century by monasticism. Egypt was influenced more by Christianity than she influenced Christianity. Yet a few facts of her religious ideas should be related.

In Egypt the education was centered around its religion. Their exercises were taken from morals and religious works. The higher learning was connected with the temples, especially the priests. The education of the priests embraced a thorough knowledge of their religion, of ritual and ceremonies of morals, laws, mathematics, astronomy, astrology.



rhetic and different forms of writing. It is probable that some of their religious conceptions were of a high order which were reserved for the priests. The religious education of the masses was not very elevating. Many of their ideas were derived from a primitive animal worship. The Egyptian boy, on the spiritual side, was thrown in a powerful influence. "He breathed an atmosphere of mystery and awe and lived in the constant presence of gods, and in expectation of immortality" (Laurie).

The Phoenicians added little to the history of religious education. They were a commercial and merchanting people. There is no evidence of any moral idea in their civilization.

Their chief gods were the Sun and Moon. Phoenicia But they were an impure and cruel people. They tried to gain heavens' favor by lascivious practices on feast days. The only valuable

thing left by them is the warning. Many other nations that are lost in sensual materialism should take heed.

Much could be said about the religious education of the Hebrews but we do not have the space in such a short resume of this kind. The whole system was based on religious training. Civil authority was governed by religion. Kemp said, "The development of Hebrew nationality and the maintenance of Hebrew racial characteristics and eminences are the miracles of history. The nation was cradled in Egypt,

and received its tutelage in Egyptian Heb-  
rews bondage, yet one of the most notable facts of history is the marked contrast between Hebrew and Egyptian religion and social organization. The Hebrew religion was the one definitely monotheistic and strictly ethical religion of antiquity and thru Christianity has given inspiration and character to



nearly all that is noblest and purest in the highest types of modern civilization." This quotation is long, but it is the answer to a certain type of destructive criticism which tries to explain Hebrew History by a process of development from a lower stage to a higher one, creating God as the system needs him. The hand of God stayed the Hebrews from the cradle. The critic, the new Scholar, must find another explanation than that the Hebrews obtained their instruction from Egypt. The above quotation gives satisfaction to the Christian educators of the fact that they know whence the noblest and purest elements came.

The Hebrew learned his religion as it was the will of God. The father was made the teacher of his children by commandment. Later the priests were the educators, and next came the prophets, instructing, representing the

highest intellectual and spiritual life. They established schools and developed preachers. During the Exile, there arose a new class of teachers, the Scribes. First they were the copyists. Upon return Ezra organized them as the interpreters of the law. Authority in religious questions was vested in them. They became the teachers of the masses and administrators of the law.

Upon the return a new effort grew up to teach religion. The new institution that spread so rapidly was the Synagogue. The Synagogue was the place of worship and also performed the office of a school. Later the synagogue service was supplemented by a Bible school for adults and children. This was held in the synagogue in the afternoon. The Scriptures were taught and largely committed, especially the law. A system of questions and answers arose for the understanding of the



## Scriptures.

The finishing of the education of the Hebrews and their influence here will be in advance of this chapter but it will give us a clearer vision of their work. The synagogue Bible school was supposed to have existed as early as 80 B. C. Elementary day schools were established in connection with them. They became compulsory about A. D. 64. The system called for one teacher if number of pupils did not exceed twenty-five. The pupils from five to ten studied the old Scriptures, ones from ten to fifteen, studied the Mishna and if pupils continued they studied the Gemara. The Mishna was the traditional oral law and the Gemara was the comments on the Mishna. They together constituted the Talmud. This system was very narrow and limited itself to memory and formal doctrines, yet the Hebrew education was the noblest of all

antiquity.

The Jews were the first to insist on education of the whole people. The girl was taught as well as the boy. The highest aim of a Hebrew father was to rear his children in the knowledge of worship and service. Religion was the central thought of education. Specific preparation was given to each child in the tabernacle service. Dittis says, "If ever a people has demonstrated the power of education; it is the people of Israel." The child entered school at six. Scripture was taught to all and all were versed in religious rites.

The chief aim of Jewish education is expressed by Graves; "The chief aim of education, therefore, was religious and moral. The building of character was looked upon as the one goal to be achieved, and little stress was placed upon knowledge of any sort except



as it achieved this end."

Seeley has drawn up some conclusions as a summary of Oriental education. They glance at all, giving what the Orient gave to Western education. I will quote, in substance, seven of them;

1. Oriental education fostered class distinction.
2. It was non-progressive; reached no higher ideals and marked no advance in civilization.
3. It did not feel the need of trained teachers.
4. The importance of the individual was not appreciated; man was regarded as belonging to the state.
5. In general, excepting the Jews, women had no part in education.
6. In China the motive of education was to prepare for success in this life; in

India, for the future life; in Persia, to support the state; in Israel, to rehabilitate the nation, and in Egypt, to maintain the Supremacy of the Priests.

7. In no case was the conception reached that the aim of education should be to emancipate all powers of the man physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual.

The East made its impressions upon civilization, especially religion. It added its customs and forms of worship. But that transmission from the Orient to the West reveals the unfolding of modern civilization. Greece and Rome paved the outlet for Christianity.

Greece gave the tongue and Rome the territory. These three grew together, in religion, education, politics and social life. We will consider first Greece and her religion.

The earliest Greeks brought with them the



Aryan religion. It was drawn close to human life. Human life played an important part. There was no Semetic fear, no Egyptian awe and no abasement of human personality. It was the worship of the beautiful--of art--the ideal in nature and human life. Their gods were not mere symbols of nature's forces, but as found in Hellenic development, they were "the perfect expressions of human thought regarding the powers that worked in nature and in man"(Laurie). Hegel says, "It must be observed that Greek gods are to be regarded as individuals and not abstractions, like knowledge, unity, time, heaven, and necessity. The Greek gods express of themselves what they are. The gods are personalities, concrete individuals."

It is true the Hellenic mind possessed a vein of religious thought. Ideal forms seemed to satisfy their religious needs. The all-

prevailing god of the Greek was neither Zeus nor Athena, but Apollo, whose chief Shrine was at Delphi, the center of Hellenic religious unity. Hegel gives "The essence of the Greek religion is spiritual itself, and the natural is only the point of departure. It must be observed that the divinity of the Greeks is not yet the 'absolute' free-spirit, but spirit in a particular mode, fettered by the limitations of humanity." It is believed that from Homer's time the Greeks recognized an absolute, supreme god among their Gods.

Death and suffering was a deep consideration and problem for the Greek. There seemed to be a web of mystery spun around the Greek's life. But they treated lightly the after existing life with their imagination. This life was the desire of theirs to live. "The most recent inquiries point to both Semetic and Hametic element in the religion of the Greeks,



but the elements were themselves Hellenized" (Laurie). The Oriental fear of his god was not in the heart of the Greek, but the relations was an easy, pleasant and friendly one.

Sparta trained her boys to be good citizens and warriors, to possess control over their appetites, and to be honest. But "their cold cruel life to train soldiers to fight--added little to the world's civilization" (Kemp). Athens was about the same. Their gods were only used to strengthen themselves for this life. They worshipped before their special gymnastic exercises of the day and at their festivals.

When Alexander conquered the East, "the Greeks became acquainted with the monotheism and moral earnestness of the Jews, while the Jews learned to appreciate the culture of the Greeks" (Davidson). So Judaism and Hellenism mingled and its influence will be

noticed in a later chapter. The Britannica states that Greek religion was gradual penetrated by Oriental ideas and worship, while the result was an ever increasing mysticism and tendency toward monotheism. "The indebtedness of Christianity to Hellenism is one of the most interesting problems of comparative religion." Monroe says thru the gradual acceptance of the Christian religion and its modification by Greek thought and the universal social or institutional structure added by the Roman people, the composite civilization of medieval and modern times was produced as an out come of this cosmopolitan era."

The Roman influence will be seen more through the development of Christianity, but we want to give here a few of its early religious characteristics. The Romans were very unlike the Athenians. They were proud and coarse-grained to the point of brutality.



they developed neither literature, philosophy nor art until they learned them from the Greeks. "It is evident that the history of Roman education is largely a continuation of that of the Greeks"(Kemp). Davidson in describ-

Rome ing the Roman religion says "The old Roman

an theology was a hard, narrow unexpansive system of abstraction and personification which strove to represent in its pantheon the phenomena of nature, the relation of men in the state or in the clan, every act, feeling and incident in the life of the individual.

It was singularly wanting in awe and mysticism. The religious spirit which it cultivated was formal, timid and scrupulous. This shows a strong resemblance to the Spartans.

Both secular and religious education were practical, and formal, but had no feeling in them. The individual himself played no part but was only a part of the great

machine that worked for the state.

"The Roman gods were mysterious beings without human power or feelings but constantly interfering with human affairs." (Monroe). Their religion was practical in that every thing was to be done in order. This fact is revealed when they adopted Christianity as their state religion. Every thing had a god; there was a god of fallowing of plowing, of sowing, of planting and so on for every form of activity of life. "Religion was no exalted faith, no lofty aspiration after virtue, no idealization of the beautiful, no attempt to reach the life of intellectual activity, or of contemplation, or of highest religious and ethical signifiante." (Monroe).



## II

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH--TO 500 A. D.

Christianity began and spread by teaching. It is the teaching religion of the world. Henry H. Meyer writes in the Church School Magazine of Jan. 1924, "Christianity is a teaching religion," and he continues, "The achievements of Christianity are ultimately educational accomplishments by means of which both the individual life and society come gradually to a fuller, higher self-realization and to an experience of life more abundant." He goes so far as to say that Modern Western Civilization is largely a Jewish-Christian product.

#### 1. Jewish Schools at the Time of Jesus.

Judaism and Christianity are linked so closely that a distinct division is almost

impossible. One grows out of the other. Christianity was cradled in the Jewish synagogues. The study of one naturally leads to the consideration of the other. The gradual development of Christianity in the first century and the way in which it was taught, may be studied through the Jewish Synagogues from the beginning.

The Jews had always emphasized religious education. In the later they had the synagogue schools. The Rabbis tell that between 80 to 70 B. C. Simon ben Shetach, President of the Sanhedrin, re-established a system of religious schools in conjunction with the local synagogues thru out Palistine, making attendance at them obligatory. During the life of Christ teachers were appointed over provinces to teach in these schools. The evidence found in Philo, Josephus and the Talmud seems to show that this system of synagogue Bible



schools was a recognized factor at the beginning of the Christian Era. Trumbull thinks, "that the elementary schools of this Jewish system of public education were Bible schools corresponding quite closely with our own modern Sunday School, is a demonstrable fact."

In these schools the child from five to ten was to study the Bible text only. After five years of work the pupil ventured in help studies. Then the pupil from ten to fifteen would study the Mishna, i.e., the unwritten Mosiac traditions with their rabbinical commentaries, and the Bible text. After a pupil had completed these two courses of study he was admitted to discussions on exegesis and details. These schools were held in or near the synagogue building at different seasons of the year.

(Marcus' Paedag. I. Israel, Vol. II pg.48)  
summarizes the rabbinical requirements on the

school question. Here is a short resume of it:-

1. Teachers must be appointed in every province, district and city.

2. The child six or over must be sent to school if physically able; must be instructed all day and part of night to accustom him to learn day or night. No vacations granted except afternoons preceeding Holidays or Holidays themselves.

3. Only a God-fearing and conscientious man is to be engaged as a teacher.

4. Neither an unmarried man or woman shall be a teacher.

5. There must be a teacher for every twenty-five pupils; and assistant up to forty and then two assistants.

6. Child may be sent to another teacher if reasons justify it.

Trumbull states that there were a Bible



school for the community in connection with the synagogue , which were located in every village of Palistine and Gentile cities beyond. Proper provisions were made for these sessions. Scripture study was very important. Sessions of the Synagogue and Bible schools, like the synagogue services, met on Monday, Thursday and Sabbath, for the benefit of country people.

(a) Methods Used.

The methods used was almost entirely interlocutory or catechetical. The pupils asked the questions and the teacher would listen and answer; not using the lecture method. The teacher would give his theme or talk and then the pupils would ask questions. He would answer by parable or would often introduce the lesson by asking a question and having the pupils answer. This composed the discussion. The teacher realized his responsibility in asking questions was equal to that in answer-

ing them. Memory work was given special attention. Jesus as a boy was, in all probability, taught in one of the synagogue schools. He is also mentioned as teaching often in the synagogues; "Jesus went about in all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom." (Matt. 4:23). He proved to be the greatest Teacher. He taught mostly by parable. His questions and answers were not surpassed; "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." Paul had been a scholar in the Beth-ha-Midrash of Gamaliel. He was trained as a Teacher. After his conversion he taught in many synagogues. "Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord" Acts 15:35. Paul and Silas taught for three weeks in the synagogues at Thessalonica. Paul taught again in the synagogue at Corinth. Trumbull



stated that he started a new Bible-school in "The house of a certain man named Titus Justus.. whose house joined hard to the synagogue." He taught here one year and six months, Again at Ephesus, he tried to teach in the synagogue, but later took the Christians out "in the school of Tyrannus" which "continued for the space of two years" Acts 9:1-10.

(b) Adoption by Christians.

The Christian church started its training in the synagogue.

"The Christian Church was almost universally formed by a secession from a Jewish synagogue." (Milman, Hist. of Christianity, Vol III). The Church from its beginning, taught the Scriptures and had teachers for their work. The early preaching was more like teaching than our preaching. Haslett says, "During the greater part of the first century A. D. the home and the oral teaching in public, were

the two chief and probably the only kinds of religious instruction provided for the people." In describing the subjects of this early instruction he relates that "many of the schools had sacred biography, sacred history, Jewish customs, memorizing of Scripture passages and Biblical doctrines--God, sin, grace, prayer, regeneration, resurrection and the like. The chief text books were the Bible, dialogue, Jewish history and religious poetry."

This first century was the age of no institutions of learning. The synagogue school was only for giving information and religious teaching. The Bible school was practically the same. Jesus went about from house to house and in synagogue teaching. Paul taught in his hired house at Rome to all who came to him. The disciples met at each other's houses. Children would gather around their teacher. We have considered in general the synagogue



and the schools in connection with it. A few facts about the home will add to the educational knowledge of this period.

The Homes were seats of religious training. Timothy is a good example to cite. The father and mother were the teachers. The observance of the religious practices provided training. Cope says "In the Jewish-Christian homes the child received instruction in Christian ideals and facts in the most effective manner."

Their whole life centered about religion. The homes grew to places of early meetings of the Christians. Whole families would go to these early meetings. Parents would take the children along. They met openly at first but later secretly for fear of persecution. They met in homes, barns, deserts, quarries and under the stars, and later in catacombs. Songs were sung. Scripture of the Apostles were read and much time was spent in questions and

answers. These early meetings were informal. The preacher was the leader. The congregation would ask him questions. This was their pedagogical method of religious instruction. They were at liberty any time to interrupt and ask questions. Such was the early development of the religious training. The Catechuminate, the Catechetical schools started in this early period.

## 2. The Catechumenal Schools.

"The effort of this period was mainly directed to the conversion of the Heathen." (Fisher). Before Constantine's time Fisher said that it had spread to the East, West, South and somewhat to the North. Churches were established, officers trained and appointed, the heathen converted and trained. Soon Roman persecutions began to make their impressions and the Christians suffered heavily from them. It is very important to note that



during these periods of persecutions, young Christianity did not stop to grow but spread more rapidly. It became popular and men and women gave their lives for it. Others caught the vision of Christianity and it was taught secretly in homes, caves, deserts and catacombs. Many suffered imprisonment, torture, burning at the stake, some were tarred and feathered and then burned; they met death in all manners.

In the sub-apostolic age, worship continued to be a spontaneous, living expression of religious feeling, but by the end of the second century, from Irenaeus and Tertullian, new motives and another spirit became apparent. "Worship is looked on more as a service to God" (Fisher). The spirit of training grew in the minds of the leaders. The Church Fathers began to write upon religion for the aid of others.

In Alexandria the fusion of Greek philosophy and Christian philosophy began. The Jewish Philo had blended Plato's teaching with the doctrines of Moses and the prophets; by "means of allegory the Old Testament had been made to re-echo with a modified sound, the teaching of the greek schools of that" (Fisher). In such communities the Christians multiplied. Here the Catechumens were instructed in doctrine. Also in this environment "the Catechetical school developed itself into a theological Seminary, where abstruse points of divinity were handled and young men were trained for clerical office" (Fisher). The Alexandrian theology was an attempt to adjust the relation of Christian doctrine to reason and philosophy. It was the first effort to bridge the chasm between Christianity and the wisdom of the Gentiles. Here, also, in this environment heresies started. The heresies were



bitter enemies of Christianity but at the same time they developed the doctrine of Christianity. I believed the reason for this Christian stability and growth thru the first few centuries of hard fought battles is well stated in Fisher's "Beginnings of Christianity," page 507;- "It is held by considerate inquirers of all schools that their faith in the Resurrection was the fountain of all their zeal, the one chief source of their courage and activity. From this faith historical Christianity takes its start and derives its life."

The Catechumenate school, the Synagogue school and the Bible school are three schools very closely related to each other. The Catechetical school developed from them. The Catechumenate school was established for the instruction of those who were being prepared for baptism. It soon grew to be an

institution for the training of Children, candidates, and the heathen.

As the Church began to extend itself, it needed some sort of an institution for instruction of the new candidates for church membership. A short period of probation was set. It was thought necessary at this time because Christianity was new and many persons desired to unite with it that were unqualified, coming from heathenism. "The demands were met by the gradual institution of popular instruction in Christian principles, for Jews and pagan proselytes, call 'Catechumens' (Graves). Origen said that the course in these schools was for only two years. Children of believers were later trained in this way; then the course was extended to four. There were four groups of Catechumens; (1) The Inquirers-- those who had just expressed their desire to enter



the Church. (2) The Hearers--those who were admitted to part of the worship but had to withdraw after the reading of the stated passages and the sermon or exhortation. (3) The Prostrate--those who joined in the prayers of the faithful. (4) The Elect--those who were ready for baptism and full communion of admission. As time went on a tendency developed to remain in the body of the catechumens indefinitely, in order that one might not be guilty of sin after his baptism and he would not be able to enjoy salvation. Many put it off until shortly before death.

"The instruction of the Catechumens was carried on in the portico or some special portion of each church; and consisted in moral and religious teachings, the reading, writing and memorizing of the Scriptures, together with some training in early psalmody" (Graves). Several meetings were held during

the week. These were supplemented by religious and moral training in the home. The teacher was known as the 'Catechist.' He was trained for his profession. Graves thinks these Catechumenal instructions became the forerunner of the parochial schools.

The development of the Catechumenate schools was "probably influenced by local conditions" (Schaff-Herzog). During Tertullian's time conversions had been forbidden and formal arrangements for such would have been direct rebellion. In Origen's day, the Church had enjoyed a long period of peace; Catechumens were permitted to attend the services. This action and reaction withheld the rapid development of the school. It grew to about the fifth century when great numbers were candidates for admission; then instruction ceased gradually and the Catechumenate was reduced for immediate preparation of baptism.



Infant baptism started here. The ritual services that followed grew to be outward form and instruction became less and less. They condensed the ritual finally to but a single right before baptism.

The method of becoming a Catechumen is given by Schaff-Herzog in their Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Briefly summarized it was as follows: "A candidate announces his desire to a deacon who informs the bishop or presbyter. He is investigated and if acceptable, he receives preliminary instruction and is then set apart by the sign of the cross by the laying on of hands--the West adds with blessed salt as a Catechumen. For a while there was no special instruction but sharing that which the whole congregation gets in the 'Missa Catechumenorum.' After two or three years he may ask for baptism; he enters the class of 'Competentes' (last

group) and his name is inscribed on the church list. Immediate special preparation is given by the bishop. He passes thru certain ceremonies and finally is instructed in precise words of the baptismal creed. After learning this he is taught the Lord's Prayer. Then he denounces paganism and is baptised the night before Easter. The neophyte receives further instructions, and on the next Sunday, still wearing his white baptismal robe, he takes his place among the congregation as a baptised Christian. He joins in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the prayer of the Children of God."

### 3. The Catechetical Schools.

"The school at Alexandria was the earliest regular school for Christian teaching of clear evidence" (Cope). This was a proper and fitting place for such schools to rise, because Alexandria had had a great intellect-



ual past. Greek culture had been taught in her schools. Her philosophy was formed into a philosophy that would meet the Jewish Philosophy. As remarked above, Philo united these two. So when Christianity needed a school of higher instruction Alexandria was the place for such a school. We will see in the development of the Catechetical school that in many points it is similar to the Catechumenate school.

As long as the Christian Church was in Jewish communities it followed the plans of the Jews, but in new territories varied methods were used to instruct the Gentile. "As Christianity had no land of her own she adopted different methods suited to each locality" (Trumbull). Catechetical schools centered in places of learning. They were established for old and young. Julian the Apostate, tried to stop the Christian schools and Christianity

itself. "The Emperor realized that the continuous life of Christianity pivoted on the school idea--on interlocutory teaching of the young--and that, if he could put an end to this line of Christian work, he could hope to check the permanent progress of Christianity" (Trumbull). Yet how slow we are even today to realize the importance of the teaching of children for the future development of Christianity.

These institutions were for preparing Christian teachers. They were in many Eastern Churches from the second to the fifth century. They were different from the Catechumenate school which were attached to the church for instructing the proselytes and children. "These Catechetical schools were intended to communicate a scientific knowledge of Christianity" (Americana). The first one of note appeared in the latter



part of the second century in connection with an Egyptian Church at Alexandria. This was modeled after famous schools of Grecian learning. The exact origin is uncertain. Almost all information is received through Jerome. The early teachers, Pantaenus, Clement and Origen combined "Oratory and Music with the principles branches of theological study, exegesis, the doctrines of religion and the traditions of the Church" (Americana). They distinguished between the popular religious belief and the Gnosis. Christian Theology was established as a science.

At first this school was for adults, a theological Seminary, but later it gave recognition to children. Origen at eighteen, went out thru the city and gathered children from the many churches--"He organized them into groups for instruction" (Cope). He was soon appointed head of the schools for children.

They started here to call them Catechetical schools. This school served the same purpose to a large degree as the Catechumenate. It was for those who were to be admitted to the Church as well as for training. Its pupils were both adults and children. These pupils were instructed both in Church doctrine and history of their faith. In these schools "the instruction was exceedingly careful, systematic and graded according to the development of the pupil, and his progress toward full admission into the church" (Cope). Cope gives a similar classification for these schools as you find given for the Catechumenate school, i.e. Inquirers, Hearers, Worshippers and the Electi.

"The methods used by the Catechetical school varied with the local church. The Catechetical instruction was so popular that nearly all edifices were constructed for the



accommodation of its subjects"(Trumbull). Origen placed the interlocutory method above the hortatory or didactic method, as a means of instruction. Augustine approved of the catechetical methods of teaching. Trumbull draws this conclusion from his reading, that the interlocutory method was predominant in the early church.

These schools had for their pupils children and adults of both sexes. Among their teachers were laymen and women. The scholars were taught individually as well as in classes. The subject-matter of instruction began with the Old Testament story of Creation and went on to the most practical details of Christian life.

There were many other schools but they varied little from the above example, with the exception of the one at Antioch, which was different. Lucian is the reputed founder

of the Antiochian school of theology. This school was more fully developed in the fourth century, but Schaff says, "the real founders of that school are Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus (379-394) and Theodorus, bishop of Mopuestia (393-428); both formerly presbyters of Antioch." This was not a regular institution of continuous teachers and it was not a Catechetical school like of Alexandria, but a school of theology. Schaff says again, "The characteristic features of this school are attention to revision of text, a close adherence to the plain, natural meaning according to the use of language and the condition of the writer and justice to the human factor." It is different from the Allegorical method of Alexandria; it clings to the true Scripture; it may be stated that this school formed around great teachers. These teachers were distinguished from Alexandrian school



by more sober views of Christianity, a literal interpretation of Bible, bolder discussions of doctrines. This was one of the great early schools of special theological training. But the Nestorian and Eutychian Controversy ruined the school in the fifth century. Similar ones were established at Edessa in the third century but destroyed 489 and one then at Nisibis.

These schools began to spring up in every city of learning. Christianity began to spread rapidly to the West from the second to the sixth centuries. Persecutions had scattered the believers. They taught Christianity wherever they were driven. In this manner and by missionary efforts it had spread over the Continent into England by the sixth century. St. Gregory the Illuminator, of the fourth century, established schools in Armenia to Christianize it. Bing ham says "A cannon

attributed to the sixth General Council of Constantinople, A. D. 680, which provides the setting up of charity schools in all country churches." In all these later schools the Bible text was the primary subject of study of teaching. Children memorized the Scriptures.

Christianity continued to spread in more countries and finally grew worldly. Changed methods were introduced and the Spiritual life declined. Proudfit said, when "the ecclesiastical spirit overcame the evangelical, and the church grew---worldly, making more of a splendid ritual than of a pure faith, and magnifying Church orthodoxy above vital piety---catechetical instruction, of course, declined." (This quotation is from Trumbull's Lectures on the Sunday School).

Defects appeared in the teaching of Christianity from the beginning, but the singular



influence of Christianity has never been equalled. Along with this growth in the church there was developing one of the strongest institutions of the Middle ages, i.e., Monasticism, which we will study in detail in a later chapter.

Cope summarizes the following facts concerning the Catechetical school.

1. The Catechetical students are those in preparation for admission into the Church.
2. The course of study was roughly graded into two to four years.
3. The subject-matter was sacred history, Jewish customs and memorizing Scripture, Christian doctrine and teaching of Jesus.
4. The method of teaching was in classes; often by laymen, women and also by students.
5. The text-book material was the books of the Old Testament, Religious poems and some of the letters of the New Testament.

General education grew up under the Church's care. At first its curriculum was Christian. Catechetical schools show that Christianity was not merely the friend but also the subject-matter of education in the modern sense. The New International Standard Encyclopedia states that "The history of religious education has been bound up with that of the control of education by priesthoods and Churches." Again it remarks "Inasmuch as the civic virtues of the people are cultivated and sanctioned by religious observances and beliefs, religious education had been of the greatest importance in developing cohesive and powerful nationalities." Wherever these early schools went Christianity grew. It became the apex on which the spread of Christianity was built.

The early influence of Christianity upon thought, education, life, government, customs



and civilization at large can not even be estimated. "Into the life of Greek Culture and intellectual activity of the Cosmopolitan period, modified, supplemented, and extended as it had been thru adoption by the Romans, and into the life of Roman activity at its height of power, tho past its prime vigor and positive virtues, Christianity was introduced in the first century to spread with great rapidity to modify this foreign world both in regard to tho't and to conduct, and then, on the other hand, to be itself profoundly modified as well," (Monroe). It is evident that Christianity was influenced much by Greek Culture and Roman Practicality. After the first century wherever Greek culture went Christianity went also. This great influence is marked by the many heresies that rose during the first centuries of its history. Many of them attempted to interpret

Christian teachings in the light of the varying schools of Greek philosophy.

Christianity added a new ideal to man's education. This was the moral nature. A complete readjustment of social and educational factors occurred. The old idea of religion being connected and part of the state and politics, gave way and made religion a practical thing. But soon paganism divided the early church leaders. Heathen Literature crept in and prevented advancement of education. Christianity, outside Monasticism, was almost lost. Monroe said that learning almost ceased to exist after the Catechetical schools and that there followed for a period of a few centuries known as the "Dark Ages." During this period asceticism from worldly interests drew the religious people and those that desired to learn, away from the public. Their influence was limited and the rest of



the people fell into moral debasement and ignorance.

From the beginning Christianity recognized the brotherhood of man; it raised woman, gave the child its rights. Equality became universal. The actual social conditions were raised to a higher standard. New life existed where ever Christian principles were planted.

### III

#### MONASTIC EDUCATION DURING THE DARK AGES.

The Monastic period of Christianity is one of the longest and most interesting periods in the history of the Christian Church. It starts from the age of the Gospels and stretches out to modern times. Its beginnings were small and feeble, but it grew in power and influence from the 6th century to the 13th century. With the on-coming of the Reformation monasticism declined.

The monastic life proper may be said to have started with the persecution of the Christians. Threatened by the sword of the Romans, the Christians sought shelter. They withdrew from the cities and lived a solitary life. Away from the city, they could live as they desired, meditating upon religion. The monastic ideal thus developed and finally



this solitary life proved fit for the development of Christian character. Out of such circumstances rose the great monastic orders of Latin Christianity.

### 1. General Characteristics of Monasticism.

The characteristics of early asceticism lingered with monasticism thru-out its entire history. At first, the rules were very strict and strenuous, but during the development of the orders, asceticism, in its extreme form, began to wane. The desire for the soul to separate itself from the world and draw nearer to God penetrated every form and order. The origin of many of the orders was in this manner. A man, more religious, perhaps than his fellows, would desire to reform the degenerated members of his order, or people outside the order, from the way they were living. He would not start with the idea of founding a new order, but would practice a peculiar

form of asceticism to educate his soul. He, then, conceiving this idea withdrew from society and started living alone, practicing his peculiar form of asceticism. Others expressed their desire to live with him, and thus lived the same ascetic life, after a gradual growth the little band would seek disciples. They grew rapidly at times because the age was committed to the ascetic ideal. Monks were obtained easily. Before many years had passed the disciples probably selected the founder as their guide and Superior. This called for a vague organization. The Superior became the teacher, and later with others helping, new candidates were instructed in this religious manner of life. In some such manner many of the early practices began and the orders became religious educational institutions.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says concerning



monasticism; "It is a system of living which owes its origin to those tendencies of the human soul which are summed up in the terms of asceticism and mysticism." We see by the above statement that asceticism played a very fundamental part. First this mysticism is closely allied to asceticism. We can say of it that mysticism is the craving for union of soul with Deity. The mystic wanted to separate himself from the world, in solitude and to bring himself into union with the Deity. Thus away from the world and sin, he educated and trained his soul. The same authority defines asceticism in this manner, "Asceticism is the effort to give the effect to the hankering after an ever-progressive purification of the soul and an atoning for sin by renunciation and self-denial in things lawful."

The relation of monasticism practiced by these early religious seekers often in such

a crude manner, to religious education, is obvious. Without the modern curriculum and methods of teaching, the orders tried to put into practice what they deemed to be right. It must be admitted that these practices went to the extreme. Even the ascetic life became very corrupt. Yet this was their way, in the beginning of training themselves along religious lines. These practices were developed even before the editing of many manuscripts, and many centuries before printing. Thus, they were passed on orally and were developed by inner-thought and by activities. Many of these practices grew into customs and these customs became the rules for developing the Religious life. But this fact must not be lost sight of in sympathizing with these ascetics, that though they started out to fulfill that hankering after an ever-progressive purification and self-denial, monasticism



degenerated during the Middle Ages, into what was in many places the most corrupt and damnable life that the Church had seen in her history.

Along with asceticism as a general characteristic of monasticism there is also the three-fold vow. At first the vow was very simple, being merely a pledge to live the secluded life, but later it came to have a very important place. Chastity was the first requirement. This ideal was early a part of Monasticism and it was the first thing emphasized. It can be said fairly that at least a mild monasticism started within the Apostolic Age. Many claim that the way Jesus and his Apostles lived was a mild form of monasticism. It is well known that men and women abstained from marriage in the first century for the Gospel's sake. Chastity grew with the eremitical and cenobitical life until all orders, examined

by the writer, embraced it. Its importance and place grew along with the spread of the monastic orders. The idea of chastity developed, too, from being a very simple part of the vow, until it was expressed in a three-fold manner. The first aspect, virtue, was essential from the beginning. It played an important part in developing the religious nature. Pure thoughts, clean thinking and right action go to make up the religious character which Jesus demanded, yesterday, today, and forever. The monks sought to refrain from all things that would turn the appetite against virtue. All things with relation to the opposite sex were excluded from their lives. Celibacy, the second phase of chastity was practiced from the time St. Antony of Egypt. To go back into the formulating period of monasticism some sanction from the Bible was thought to be found in the fact that some



of the apostles were not married. Paul approved of marriage, but for some he said it was not good if it hindered them in carrying the Gospel. The third part namely the vow to do these things was added with its full significance later. The vow at first was simple. Those taking it pledged themselves to live the monastic life and to cultivate chastity. This pure clean, manner of life of the beginning was often departed from in the Middle Ages. Vice was common, unclean living was dominant, and the morals were at the lowest ebb in Christian history.

Poverty, the second part of the vow, is equally as important, as the first. The orders took as their authority for complete poverty, Jesus' words to the Rich Young Ruler, "Go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." St. Antony and St. Pachomius practiced poverty and it continues today. The monks were not

allowed to possess any personal property or to have any interest in such matters. It was their business to seek and cultivate the religious life, trusting to God to feed them. This rule of poverty has various interpretations as will be seen in the history and practices of later orders. The monastery in which members of the orders generally lived was an agricultural institution. The monks worked for the monastery and thus provided food for all. But in their ascetic practices of eating, it did not require very much food for them. This refraining from owning any property and living in poverty went, like the other characteristic, to the extreme. In its extreme form it may be seen in the Franciscans which will be discussed in a later chapter.

The last part of the vow-obedience-was not added until later. It was in a fruitative



period from the third to the sixth century when obedience to superior authority became greatly emphasised especially in the Benedictine order. Complete obedience was required of all monks.

The relation and contribution of these aspects of monasticism to Religious Education will be brought out in the discussion of the orders. Each order made its peculiar contribution. With all the faults and errors already referred to monasticism added much to religious education. The Bible teaches temperance and abstinence from excesses. Asceticism developed from such principles as the various orders developed asceticism was made more extreme and so became a hinderance instead of a help, but it taught the centuries that people would sacrifice, society, property, friends, kin and even life, for the gospel message. We have to admit that monasticism was far from what it

should have been. It, with other causes, kept Christianity in the background for many centuries. It was by many looked upon with horror. Monks made the common people almost hate Christianity. But throughout the development of monasticism mingled with heathenism, paganism, and corruption, was the golden thread of a genuine religious purpose and service. Today we reap the grain that was sown with the tares. In spite of all their ascetic practices; poverty, living in caves, begging for physical sustenance, separation from the world, fanatical customs and late corruption the monasteries propagated learning, cultivated a type of religious life and preserved those priceless manuscripts of the gospels from which we today, if we will, may secure a saving knowledge of Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

## 2. Eastern Monasticism.

Eastern monasticism includes that of the



countries of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. Monasticism developed in the East before any progress was made in the West. Palestine was a center of monasticism until about the 7th century when Constantinople came to the forefront. The monastic life proper however began in Egypt about the last half of the third century.

"The cause of the new movement which made large numbers desert the world in order to live an ascetic and contemplative life in the desert has been sought, on Jerome's authority, (Vita Pauli, I) in the Decian persecution; but historical proof is lacking---- Keim's theory of the influence of neo-platonism is equal untenable; though this system undoubtedly affected the Church, it can not possibly have been a determining factor in the growth of monasticism, and it could not have had a specially strong influence upon the rural

population of the Thebaid. The real cause of the monastic movement is to be sought in the development of the Christian ideal." (Scheff-Herzof's Encyclopedia of Religious Ed.) The author of the article just quoted continues to point out that the distressing social and political circumstances of Egypt, contributed to the increase of Christian heroism. He also claims that the principal motive of Christian monasticism was the desire to attain everlasting happiness and moral perfection by escape from the world. In a footnote he gives as a reason for monasticism a doctrine common both to advanced and to some primitive religions, that the world or flesh is evil and that perfection in the religious life is attained by retirement from the world. Undoubtedly, however, the persecution of the Christians contributed somewhat to the growth of monasticism. A people who are scattered because of religious



convictions, will group themselves together in foreign countries and carry on their religious practices. A modern example of this is to be found in the case of some Lutheran bodies that settle in communities in the United States and carry on their religious services in the German tongue. They mingle together, retaining the customs and manners of former days. Thus also the early Christians, as individuals or as groups, desired to maintain their faith and practices. They found it difficult to do so, in foreign countries. Therefore they withdrew from the foreign society and mingled with fellow Christians, or observed their practices alone.

(a) Pre-Christian and Early Christian Monasticism.

The Greek mysticism and asceticism of their "Glorious-Age" never produced a monastic system among the Jews, either in Judea or in Alexandria.

There were, however, certain monastic orders among the Jews. The Essenes in Judea, before Christ, lived a fully organized monastic life. The same may be said in regard to the Therapeutae in the neighborhood of Alexandria. The article in the Britannica maintains that this pre-Christian monasticism had little if any influence on the rise and development of Christian Monasticism.

Some writers think that the origin of Christian Monasticism was in the Gospels. They quote Jesus' words to the Rich Young Ruler, Mt. 19:21 "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Schaff disagrees with this interpretation of the passage. There are those who maintain that Jesus lived a monastic life and there was undoubtedly a monastic touch in his manner of living. But only at times did he



withdraw from society. The Gospels clearly show that he associated, mingled with and taught the multitudes. He ate heartily and grew normally. One wonders if Jesus had practiced the extreme asceticism as developed at a later date, whether it would have been possible for Him to have stood the great strain under which he must have lived. Jesus was not monkish nor did he possess the spirit of the Cenobite. He mingled with the common people who "heard him gladly. He ate with publicans and sinners." "The Apostles did not live a hermit life; neither did the early Christians. There is no authority for the contention that they did so" (Bibl.Theol.& Eccles. Ency.) Monasticism was at least in part, a modified form of heathenism. The lower pagan religions had many practices similar to the monastics. But there were high motives as well. Because of so much sin in the cities, earnest

souls sought a place to live spiritually.

Again, because of the persecution plus this sin, we find as early as middle of the second century, people living single lives, but no unions. A quotation from the Britannica here explains best the true situation: "Practice of asceticism asserted itself at an early date in Christian life. Men and women abstained from marriage, from flesh, meat, from use of intoxicating drinks and devoted themselves to prayer, religious exercises and works of Charity. First, this was done in their homes. In time the tendency to withdraw from society and give oneself wholly to the practice of religious and ascetical exercises, set in; at any rate in Egypt, at the middle of the third century, it was the custom for such ascetics to live in solitary retirement." Credit has been given to St. Antony (Anthony) as the father of Christian monasticism. He spent



twenty years in seclusion. He was asked by a group of religious people to come forth and organize ascetic life. Compliance to this request took place in the first years of the 4th Century. This act must be regarded as the inauguration of Christian Monasticism.

(b) Egyptian Monasticism

(1) The Monasticism of St. Antony

St. Antony founded his system of monasticism about A.D. 300 in Egypt and it prevailed there until the middle of the fifth Century. The members of the order lived in deserted places that fringed rivers in monastic habitations. Sometimes they lived as hermits, sometimes several monks lived together. The more general practice, however, was the hermetic life. The two great centers were at Nitria and Scete. The system was largely voluntary. There was no organized community, no living according to rules, as developed later. Their life was semi-



eremitical. Near Nitia St. Antony and his disciples would gather on Saturday and Sunday for worship in the Church. Each day was divided between prayer and work. The strictest discipline in their ascetic practices prevailed.

## (2) The Monasticism of St. Pachomius

There was existing about the time of St. Antony, another monasticism of a very different kind in the southern part of Egypt. St. Pachomius established the first Christian Cenobitism and the first monastery. At his death 346, he had established nine monasteries for men and women, in Abysinnia. Their life was cenobitical, regulated by minute rules and was highly organized for their time. Work was an intragal part of the life, and was undertaken for its own sake and not as an occupation. This characteristic was introduced into many later orders and played a large part in monastic activities. "This marks a distinctly new ideal" (Britannica)



in monasticism. St. Pachomius created the first "Religious Order." Abbots were placed at the head of each monastery and the abbot of the head monastery was the superior over all monasteries. Egyptian monasticism began to decline at the end of the fifth century, at the beginning of the Mohammedan occupation.

Monasticism went from Egypt to the peninsula of Sinai. Then in a few years it spread to Palestine. One of St. Antony's disciples established a monastery at Gaza near the end of the fourth century. Another was established at Bethlehem and one on the Mount of Olives. Monasticism spread from Palestine to Syria.

Jerome names as one of the pioneers at Odessa, a certain Julian, a contemporary of Julian, the Apostate. Also Ephraem Syrus was one of the celebrated ascetics of this region. He was born of heathen parents and had run away from home because of an inclination to become a Christian.

He came to a Christian community and received training. As he grew to manhood he became very orthodox. He then settled in Odessa in 363 and "lived as a hermit in a cave, earnestly studying, and preaching to his fellow Monks." (Dargan). Colonies of hermits flourished in the neighborhood of Antioch in the middle of the fourth Century. Jerome stayed there as a hermit from 373 to 380.

There was a peculiar ascetic order which began in Northern Syria about this time called "Pillar Saints". This order became very common in the fifth century. "The most celebrated of the Pillar Hermits was the Simeon Stylites, 390-459. Born in Northern Syria, expelled from monastery for excessive austerities, at thirty years of age he made himself a pillar six feet high and took his abode upon it. He made new pillars and so by the end of ten years the stand reached sixty feet. He lived



on this pillar for thirty years without ever descending. A ladder enabled his disciples to take him food. From here he preached and taught." (Britannica).

Because the Asiatics loved asceticism monasticism spread rapidly. The monastic life largely took on eremitical form, and today Syrian and Armenian Monks are to be found dwelling in caves and desert places, given wholly to the practices of austerity and contemplation.

### (c) Greek Monasticism

Monasticism began in the fourth and fifth centuries to take root in new territories. It had spread from Southern Egypt through the countries to Northern Syria, and to parts of the Orient. In the fourth century it spread into Asia Minor and to Greek territory. Many very fanatical leaders established monasteries. An outstanding leader was Basil of whom one

writer says-- "Monasticism, was domesticated by Basil, the Great, in Cappadocia." (Schaff-Herzog) Basil's work in the development of monastic life was epoch-making. He had two rules, a longer and a shorter one, which are known by his name. While they are catechisms on monastic virtues and duties rather than formal rules, they are today the only standard of monasticism in the Greek and Slavonic Churches.

Eustathius of Sebaste was the first to introduce monasticism into Greek Christianity in Asia Minor, about 340. St. Basil adapted it to Greek and European ideas and needs. His plan was more like that of St. Pachomius than that of St. Antony. St. Basil was strictly opposed to practices of eremitical life and excessive asceticism, and he favored the necessity of labor. These lines laid down by him have continued in Greek monasticism. The idea



of work has decreased to a life more devotional and full of contemplation.

Before St. Basil established his system, he visited monasteries in Egypt and Syria. He saw the excessive bodily austerities of these systems. Upon his return he organized a monastery at Neo-Caesarea, in Pontus. He declared cenobitical life superior to the eremitical. Fastings and austerities were not allowed to interfere with prayer and works. The monks had common prayer, seven times a day. They also had common meals. Their life consisted of contemplation, prayer, reading the Scriptures and heavy work. Such was the religious training they received in St. Basil's system. Both his longer and shorter Rules were catechisms about the Spiritual life and not regulations for a working community. The monks did not take any vows but "Obedience, personal poverty, chastity, self-denial, etc. were enforced." (Britannica).

He added another feature to the monastic practices; boys were taken into his monasteries. They received a liberal education but were not required to become monks.

Greek monasticism made no change for four centuries. About 800, Theodore became abbot of the monastery of the Studium in Constantinople. He set out to reform his own monastery and to restore the primitive vigor of the spirit of St. Basil. He drew up constitutions, in addition to St. Basil's, and afterwards codified them. His efforts gave new life to monasticism at Studium and the reform spread throughout the rest of the Greek Empire.

The constitution provided for a system of officials that superintended the various departments of the monastery. Liturgical Services took up considerable portion of the day. The remaining time was divided between reading and work. The copying of Greek manuscripts was



one of the great pieces of work done by the members. They then became familiar with the Scriptures by copying them and received a genuine religious education through their work. Not only the monks that copied the manuscripts thus learned, but others whom they told about the sayings of the Scriptures. Classical and ecclesiastical manuscripts of antiquity were also copied. In addition to the copying, literary and theological studies were pursued. Mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius was cultivated. Their life, tho simple, self-denying and hard, was not one of extreme austerities.

The educational aspects of monasticism, especially those relating to religious education, began to develop from the early life of prayer and contemplation. Definite study was later demanded. The work turned from the agricultural, to that of intellectual development. The life

was not one of extreme austerities and punishments but was more fitted to spiritual growth. Excessive practices of physical punishment were seen to destroy mental vitality, thus making men unfit for the best mental and spiritual life.

The Church by now had grown to the West. Chrysostom, Basil, Ambrose, and Augustine had given their contribution to Church history and education. The Nicene, and Chalcedon Councils had added great doctrinal questions. All of this was available for study by the monks. Along with these additions they received training in other ecclesiastical and theological problems.

The monks of the eighth century were divided into two classes; the choir-monks and lay-brothers. The life of the choir monk was taken up with Church services, private prayer and study. The lay-brothers did the external work.



All were encouraged to approach confession and communion frequently.

During the Middle Ages, the center of Greek monasticism shifted from Constantinople to Mount Athos. Then about 950 on for four centuries monasteries grew in great numbers. Basilian monasticism spread from Greece to Italy and to Russia. Rufinus had translated St.Basil's rules into Latin (c 400) and they became the rule of life in certain Italian monasteries; St.Benedict refers to "The Rule of our holy Father Basil". The writer of the article--- in the Britannica believes that St.Benedict owed more to St.Basil than any other monastic legislator.

By the sixth and seventh centuries Greek monasteries appeared in Rome, South Italy and Sicily. During the Saracens and Arab invasions of eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, crowds of fugitive monks poured into Southern

Italy from Greece and Sicily. By middle of ninth century Basilian monasteries of Greek-speaking people had spread to Rome. From here came some of our valuable Greek manuscripts. This same order too, spread as far in the eastern direction. The first monastery in Russia was established at Kiev about 1050. Before the World War there were about 400 monasteries for men and 100 for women, in the Russian Empire. The Greek monks helped greatly in the evangelization of the Slavs. There are now about 100 monasteries in the Turkish Empire.

The Basilian monasticism developed three kinds of monasteries. The first, the Cenobia proper, is characterized by the full monastic common life. In the idiorrhythmic type the monks use their private means to live by, and they lead general migratory and free kind of monastic life. The third is called the auras.



The members lived a semi-eremitical life mainly given to devotional and contemplative exercises. Their Church services were of extreme length. The intellectual study was little and the manual labor almost disappeared.

### 3. Western Monasticism

The knowledge of monastic life was introduced into Western Europe by St. Athanasius about 340 or 342. Athanasius in 337 was restored to his see from which he had been deposed. After the death of Constantine the younger, Athanasius was again deposed in 341. In the meantime he betook himself to Rome, where Pope Julius declared his innocence in a synod held in 342. He remained in Rome until 347. On this trip it is claimed, he introduced Monastic life. Because of his position and influence many monks came with him.

Western monasticism was patterned after the Egyptian model, the hankering after eremitical



life, and the practice of extreme bodily austerities. But it was soon discovered by monks that the Egyptian manner of monasticism was not suited to the climate of southern Europe. The monks required more food, better shelter and more clothes. By the end of the fifth century institutions were disorganized. Thus monasticism was quieted until St. Benedict effected and laid down his rules, which led to the development of one of the most influential, if not the most influential, of all the monastic orders.

(a) Rise and Early Development of the Benedictine Order.

St. Benedict, the great organizer of western monasticism, was born in Nursia, 480, of wealth parents. He was educated at Rome, but at seventeen he determined to devote himself to monastic life. He fled from Rome and returned to the desert of Subiaco. There he shut



himself up in a dismal cave where he remained for three years unknown to anyone, except a monk, Romanus, who let food down to him by a rope. His fame spread and he was called to be abbot of a neighboring monastery. Crowds flocked to hear him preach. His hearers grew to be his disciples and shortly, at least twelve, monasteries were erected upon the one spot. Then he was compelled to move to Monte Cassino from which center the order spread thru-out Europe. St. Benedict died about 543. Dupin thinks the "Rule of St. Benedict" (Regula Monachorum) is his only work extant which is truly his.

Thus "Subiaco in Abruzzi was the cradle of the Benedictines". (Britannica). Here, as stated, Benedict established twelve monasteries and then migrated to Monte Cassino where he established the monastery which became the Center of his spreading rule. Monte Cassino



was sacked by the Lombards about 589 or 590. Then the monastic Community came to Rome. Here it was established in a monastery attached to the Lateran Basilica-- in the center of the ecclesiastical world. Out of this monastery, writers in the Enc.Brit. claim in 596 St. Augustine took monasticism to England, the first country outside of Italy where Benedictine life was introduced. During the seventh century it was introduced into Gaul, and the English monks carried it into German lands about the eighth century. The Irish Rule of Columban was absorbed by the Benedictines during the same century. It became the only rule and form of monastic life thru-out Western Europe.

St. Benedict started his order with two dominating aims in view. The first was to "eliminate from monastic life the Oriental asceticism and extreme bodily austerity." The



second was to "put down the spirit of 'vie', that is, contend for superiority, among one another and live under a rule." The individual was to be sunk in the community life. His rule was a new creation in the history of monasticism. "It supplanted all other monastic rules in Western Europe and for many centuries was the only form of monasticism in Latin Christianity." (Britannica).

The object of the Benedictine monks was like that of other monks-- the sanctifying of their souls but they sought to do this by living a community life. St. Benedict defines his monastery as "a school for the service of the Lord". His rule introduced law, order and stability. He joined monk and community together.

The Catholic Encyclopedia gives a very good discussion of the Rule of St. Benedict. It will be well to give a fairly complete



description of this rule because we are concerned chiefly with what was taught and how the Christians lived. His rule was written in low Latin vernacular, thus, making it possible for the common people to read it. This rule marks a turning point in the whole trend of monasticism in the West. "His rule consisted of a carefully considered combination of old and new ideas. The Rule consisted of 73 Chapters; 9 on Duties of the Abbot; 13 on Regulating the worship of God; 29 on Discipline and Penal Code; 10 on Internal Administration of the monastery and 12 on Miscellaneous. "The rule opens with a prologue, in which St. Benedict sets forth the main principles of the religious life, viz., the renunciation of one's own will and the taking up of arms under the banner of Christ. He proposes to establish a 'school in which the services of Salvation shall be taught, so that by persevering in the



monastery till death, his disciples may deserve to become partakers in Christ's kingdom" (Catholic). The essence of the rule is as follows: Chapter I defines four principle kinds of monks. (1) Cenobites--those living in a monastery under an abbot. (2) Anchorites or hermits-- those living in a solitary life. (3) Sarabaites-- those living by two's or three's without fixed rule. (4) Gyrovage-- Ones wandering from monastery to monastery.

Chapter II describes the qualification for an abbot stating that he is responsible for the souls committed to his care.

Chapter III ordains the calling of the brethren to council upon all affairs of importance to the community.

Chapter IV summarizes the duties of the Christian life under 72 precepts which are called 'Instruments of good works'. They are mainly Scriptural either in letter or spirit.



Chapter V prescribes the prompt, cheerful and absolute obedience to the superior in all things lawful, which obedience is called the first degree of obedience of humility.

Chapter VI deals with silence or moderation of speech.

Chapter VII treats of humility in twelve steps. Chapters VIII to XVIII deal with the regulation of the Divine Office.

Chapter XIX regulates the Reverence due to the presence of God.

Chapter XX states in main that prayers should be short.

Chapters XXI to XLVII deal with the appointments in the monastery, obeying rules, and their punishment; eating and how much; prayers; silence after compline until morning and many minor faults.

Chapters XLVIII describes labor in the field.

XLIX tells of the observance of Lent.



Chapter LII pictures the use of oratory.

Chapters LIII to LXXII deal with the receiving of guest, letters, new members, appointing of monks, provosts, reporter, action on journey and fellowship of one another.

Chapter LXXIII is an epilogue declaring that the rule is not offered as an ideal of perfection but merely as a means toward godliness and is intended chiefly for beginners in the spiritual life.

This gives us some idea of the rule of the Benedictine monastic orders. The rule reveals the true character of Christian living, the regulating of habits and the training for an Eternal home. A writer in the Catholic Encyclopedia comments on the Rule as follows:

"the first thing that must strike the reader is its wonderful discretion and moderation; its extreme reasonableness, and its keen insight into the capabilities as well as the



weakness of human nature. There are no excesses, no extraordinary asceticism, no narrow mindedness, but rather a series of sober regulations based upon common sense."

The quotation above is very complimentary. But if the list of things mentioned in the outline be examined the reader may wonder if the description is not somewhat over-oratorical. Upon examination the reader will discover that only Chapter IV gives the Christian a guide to go by; and Chapter XIX is the only chapter that speaks in the title about God, and that there is no reference in the 73 chapter-titles to Jesus as Savior. The rule seems to be more of a social and ethical code, peculiar to a specific set of people fitted in a specially prepared community. This code greatly affected all of the later Catholic rules and orders. Yet thru this set of laws to be so closely observed the monks were prepared to meditate upon relig-



ious ideals. These rules were an important epoch in the history of Religious Education. Extreme practices were eliminated, asceticism controlled and life in general was much improved. It must not be understood that the monks living under this rule did not train and prepare for religious life. Study, prayer and meditation went to make up the program as they lived under this rule. Rossuet called the rule, "An Epitome of Christianity, a learned and mysterious abridgement of all the doctrines of the Gospel, all institutions of the Fathers, and all the Counsels of Perfection". When reading over the summary outline of this rule the question arises in one's mind about its practical working. It must be admitted that it worked not only in the Benedictine order but in many other orders which adopted much of it for themselves. G. Cyprian Alston, O. S. B. of Downside Abbey, Bath, England, a Catholic

authority, describes it thus:- "No higher testimony can be given than the results it has achieved in Western Europe. It has the adaptability for changed times and requirements. Still with its various modifications from time to time, its principles have remained the same; and have formed the basis of a great many other religious bodies. The regulation regarding the reception and education of children, moreover, were the germ from which sprang up a great number of famous monastic schools and universities which flourished in the Middle Ages."

(b) Later Development of the Benedictine Order.

There was a revival in the Benedictine order in the fourteenth century. About 1336 the constitution was greatly modified. At this time the Black monks of St. Benedict's order were to be found in almost every country in Western Europe and Iceland. At the beginning of the



fourteenth century the order is estimated to have had 37,000 monasteries. Also up to that time it had given to the Church no less than 24 popes, 200 Cardinals, 7,000 archbishops, 15,000 Bishops, and over 1,500 canonized Saints; again it had enrolled among its number 20 Emperors, 10 Empresses, 47 kings, and 50 queens.

The order kept spreading during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the on-coming of the Reformation played havoc with the order. Its membership was reduced to about 5,000 at the end of the sixteenth century. The order continued to exist but was crippled badly for about two centuries. Many of its disciples left the order and joined Protestantism. Movements were organized in opposition to the monasteries and as the Benedictine order was the largest body it was hurt the most.

(c) Influence and Work of the Benedictine Order.



The influence of the Benedictines was probably greater than any other of the monastic orders. It was not local or national but international. At the death of St. Benedict, 543, the only countries of Western Europe which had been Christianized were Italy, Spain, Gaul and parts of British Isles. The remaining countries received the Gospel during the next few centuries, in whole or part, through the preaching of the Benedictines.

The first great work was the conversion of the Teutonic races. "Tendencies of modern historical school justifies the maintenance of the tradition that St. Augustine and his 40 companions were the first great Benedictine apostles and missionaries. Thru their efforts Christianity was firmly planted in the various parts of England. Then they evangelized the greater part of central Germany, founded and organized the German Church." (Britannica).



The second piece of work was the civilizing of Northwest Europe. Monasteries were established in all these lands. These monasteries became centers of influence by presenting object lessons in organized work. The barbarians were attracted by the life of these monks. The reforms were based upon this new ideal brought to them through the monasteries. Thus Christianity pioneered for civilization, clearing away heathenism and planting the Gospel which is the forerunner of all the higher civilizations.

The third line of influence of the Benedictine was their educational work and the cultivation of Literature. "The work of education and the cultivation of literature have always been looked upon as belonging by right to the Benedictines" (Catholic Ency.). This same Catholic authority claims that the education of the children was the germ out of which after-



wards developed the great monastic schools. In fact, this order is the first to emphasize the teaching of the children. Boys were received and trained in these monasteries. This early training must have been religious training, at least religion played an integral part in it. Cassiodorus, the minister of The Gothic Kings, gave a strong impetus to monastic learning, about 538, at Viviers in Calabria. He made his monastery into a Christian academy. He collected the best manuscripts of the age. Then he introduced and organized a plan of study for his disciples. In his plan Liberal Arts and the study of the Holy Scriptures were given great attention. Thus a monastic school was established and it became a pattern after which many others were modelled.

In England schools were established by the order. St. Augustine and his monks opened schools where-ever they established a monas-



tery. The Cloister objected to their teaching secular and profane literature, but in England they added classics. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, 668, still further developed the educational ideal. Monasteries grew rapidly in England. Their Schools were greatly improved as progress was made. Ramsay Abbey long enjoyed, it is claimed, the reputation of being the most learned of English monasteries.

Besides being the educational centers during the Dark and Middle Ages these monasteries were workshops where precious manuscripts were collected, preserved and multiplied. The monks were the Chroniclers of much of the secular history that was written during the Dark and Middle Ages. Also the writing of Latin antiquity, both classical and ecclesiastical, were transcribed and preserved by them.

This account indicates the great influence of this monastic order. What it might have done

If they had maintained their purity is not known. Nations and thrones were brought upon the Anvil of Christianity. Peoples were educated from heathenism. I find no force so great, up to Luther himself, as the monastic schools, in preserving past knowledge and teaching it to the oncoming generation.

Many methods of recruiting were used but the most outstanding one is the selections drawn from the schools connected with the monasteries. Many trained their monks from youth. How men became monks is worthy of note. No better account can be found than the one given by the Catholic Encyclopedia:- "The candidate held for admission is usually kept as a postulant for at least some weeks in order that the community he seeks to join may judge whether he is a suitable person to be admitted to the probationary stage. Having been accepted as such, he is 'clothed' as a novice, receiving



the religious habit and religious name, and being placed under the care of the novice master. He must be trained and tested for noviceship and kept apart from the rest of the community. The Canonical novitiate last one year at the end of which, if satisfactory, the novice may be admitted to simple vows, and at the end of another three years, unless rejected from grave reasons, he makes his solemn vows of "Stability, Conversion of manners, and obedience". The habit or garment which he wears consists of a tunic with leather belt.

#### IV

### MONASTIC EDUCATION DURING THE CENTRAL MEDIEVAL PERIOD. (to about 1200 A.D)

#### 1. Religious Conditions at the Beginning of the Central Medieval Period.

The teaching of religion was more or less bound up within the walls of monasticism, from the sixth to the twelfth centuries. Popes, Bishops and Priests were trained there. Up to about the tenth century the Benedictines were the leading monastic order and not much division had occurred. But at the beginning of the tenth century the Benedictine order had become loose, the old rule was neglected and the order had gone somewhat astray. It had become rich. The spirit of reform was growing in the hearts of many of the followers. The Congregation at Cluny (Clugny or Cluni) was one of the earliest to reform.



This body grew, in its reform until it became practically a distinct order within the Benedictine family. It was founded in 910 at Cluny when William the Pious founded an abbey and endowed it with full equipment. He placed over it St. Berno. Their rule became stricter and new spirit entered into the Congregation. The old Benedictine life was inaugurated and a more religious training began.

Many minor orders sprang up during the tenth century. The Church of Rome was growing more corrupt. Formalism and the worship of Mary grew to have a great place. The Mass seemed to be the center of all worship. Preaching declined because of the influence of the Mass. The clergy was corrupt. "The story of the papacy during this epoch is full of shame and glory. Early in the tenth century began the so-called 'pornocracy', the reign of harlots, when the see of Rome fell under the



blighting influence of corrupt and ambitious women". (Dargan). Confusion and turmoil reigned thru the tenth century. During this century the instruction in religion was meager while the virtues of Christianity were considered secondary.

The Church had divided into the East and West over Idol Worship. The eleventh century brings a new spirit of awakening. The clergy began to preach more fully the Gospel and some progress in character development took place. Another reform in the Benedictine order began 1098. The reforms were called the Cistercians. Their purpose was to restore the old Rule of St. Benedict as far as possible. They were at their height from about 1130 to 1340. They were engaged in agriculture and cattle raising for their occupations and by this means were linked with pious contemplation. By the fourteenth century they had at least 738 abbeys. Their



Monasteries were found from France to Hungary, Poland to Livonia, Sweden to Portugal and from Scotland to Sicily. In the outskirts they planted colonies and civilization as they did their religious teaching. The Cistercians became a great aid to the Popes.

The great cause for their decay was an inner one. They became rich and this stopped their colonization, and lessened their energy. Their life became lax. They lost their great spiritual zeal and began to decline. Many monasteries were destroyed. New leaders tried to reform the order but it was of little avail. At the beginning of the Reformation it had lost in England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Normandy and a greater part of Germany.

Some of the peculiarities of the Cistercians were:- a strict observance of the rule of St. Benedict; simplicity in mode of life and in their buildings; subsistence came exclusively



from agriculture and cattle raising; and the monks and lay-brothers were devoted to meditation and choir services.

The Crusades started in 1096 and lasted nearly to the fourteenth century. The Christians fought Islam for the recovery of the Holy Land. This movement was not educational and cannot be discussed here. A few results however may be noted. "First among the results of the Crusades is to be counted in the great increase they brought about in the power of the Church and of the Papacy." (Schaff-Herzog). Great wealth was brought into the hands of the popes. Civil arms were controlled by the popes to a large extent. These results gave the Church power and independence.

"On the other hand, it would be impossible to overestimate the stimulating effect of the Crusades on the spirit of devotion in Christian Europe" (Schaff-Herzog). Preachers left



their pulpits to preach to the multitudes. They stimulated new aspiration in religion. Selfish gain was back of much of the activity of the Crusades but "it would be treason to the majesty of man's incessant struggle towards an ideal good, if we were to deny that in an thru the Crusades men strove for righteousness' sake to extend the kingdom of God upon earth." (Britannica)

## 2. The Franciscans

One of the influential powers of the Church during the Thirteenth Century was the Franciscans. They were an improvement over previous orders or reforms. Francis, the son of a wealthy merchant, was the founder of the order. His father was a wealthy man but was "worldly ambitious and of an evil disposition". (Dargan) His father wanted him to lead the same kind of life but Francis was of another disposition and after his conversion he favored the

religious life. Later he ran away from his father and united with a monastic order. He soon became interested in the poor and finally this lead into the establishing of the order of which we are about to study.

The name, Franciscan, stands for several monastic orders that follow the rule of Francis of Assisi. The order grew and developed into a great system. Several branches were formed from it. Francis started preaching about 1209 to the poor. Soon followers became numerous. He continued his preaching and serving the poor casually until 1212. Then he organized his order, receiving permission from the Pope. They built huts of branches and twigs; had no definite place of abode; dressed as the peasants of the field; slept in barns and many times under the hedge rows when working among the peasants. They worked daily in the field for food, mixed with laborers and



the poor, lepers and outcasts. "The keynote of the movement was the imitation of the public life of Christ, especially the poverty of Christ" (Britannica). One of the aims was to possess absolutely nothing. They earned their food from day to day; if they could not earn it they were to beg. They were to make no provisions for the morrow, lay no store, create no wealth, dress in the poorest possible manner and dwell in the meanest dwellings ever.

The order grew rapidly from the beginning. Within a few years it had spread thru France, Spain, Hungary, Germany, and the Holy Land. The order became a great help to the Church. It carried its message to new people. Many were connected with the Church thru it. The Franciscans did not stay among the poor but went into the seats of learning. The Friars occupied chairs, like the Dominicans, in the leading universities. "In founding this order,

however, St. Francis did not intend it to engage primarily in educational work. His aim was to re-establish by its means the principles of the Gospel and to rekindle the spirit of "Christian Charity" (Cyclopedia of Educ.). In their missionary and educational activity they were men of action. They differed from the other monks, they went anywhere and everywhere and among those that needed the Gospel the most. They preached in public squares, villages, at cross-roads. They conducted their services in every day language. The Franciscans established schools, elementary colleges, hospitals and dispensaries.

Reform began in the fourteenth century. Many branches were founded. The old order was practically broken up. The Britannica says: "No order has had so stormy an internal history as the Franciscans. Yet in spite of all troubles and dissensions and strivings that have marred



Franciscan history, the Friars Minor of every kind, have each age, faithfully and zealously carried on St. Francis' great work of ministering to the spiritual needs of the poor". Many men gave their lives for the order. The missionary work was one of their largest activities. They contested the Dominicans in the schools of theology.

St. Francis in the starting of his order drew up a very simple rule. He presented it to Innocent III for acceptance. This first primitive rule, it is believed, was little more than a few passages of Scripture that he heard in 1208 in the chapel at Protiuncula. It contained the three vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, with some practical rules of conduct. There was another rule formulated in 1221 and the third in 1223. St. Francis promised obedience to the Pope Honorius. They were forbidden to wear shoes, ride horseback unless



necessary; they were not to receive any coins but only things needed. In describing the rule the Catholic Ency. says: "It is the tender voice of a loving father that speaks to his children thru the rule." St. Francis praised it highly. This rule, he declared "to be for his brethren the book of life, the hope of salvation, the marrow of the Gospel, the way of perfection, the key to Paradise and the covenant of an eternal alliance".

There were three distinct rules drawn up near the beginning. The later ones were started upon the first rule but sadly turned away from its simple teaching. The first rule was drawn up in its entirety by St. Francis. It had three Scriptural commands: Matt. 19:21- "Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me"; Luke 9:3- "And he said unto



them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, no scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats apiece"; Matt. 16:24-- "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." These three quotations formed the basis for his order. This rule was intended for the poor who were called "Poor men of Lyons". It had little in common with the older monastic rules.

The second rule was drawn up in 1221. St. Francis wrote this but was influenced greatly by his companions. They took away the simple ideal of St. Francis and made it adaptable to a monastic community. The rule was based upon the three original vows, but stressed poverty. The first rule was included in places, but the spiritual ideal was hampered. The new rule converted his movement into an order; ministers were made heads of provinces, custodes were

placed over smaller districts, and guardians over single houses. They added definite rules for the novitiate, the habit and the hour of prayer.

This rule was reformed by St. Bonaventura in 1223. It was confirmed by Honorius III. This was much less like St. Francis' rule; the edifying tone and the Scriptural text had disappeared while external official character appeared. A new spirit had crept in. In a word it was not "the life of the first years, marked by apostolic poverty and living, simple-hearted devotion to the Lord, but rather a carefully arranged quasi-monastic system, shorn of much of its original freedom." (Relig. Ency.).

St. Francis was made sorry over the way the order had developed, altho he worked continually for it. The spread and work he approved, but the original spirit was taken away and he felt the sting of it. In his later days he



wrote for his followers 'The Testament'. In it he expresses his views and "it is rather plaintive than angry; it looks back in a spirit of regret to the primitive days of the first of love". He urges obedience to Pope and minor authorities, also imitation of the poverty of Christ.

In conclusion it can be said that the Franciscans were one of the great movements connected with the Catholic Church that kept a-fire Christianity during the Middle Ages. Its work was far superior to that of the early monastic orders. The Franciscans mingled with society and tried to give society the benefit of their learning and progress. They maintained a high moral standard. Their work looked forward toward a higher civilization and educational and religious advance.

### 3. The Dominicans

About the time St. Francis was starting his

order another movement was being started by St. Dominic in Southern France. St. Dominic was educated more than St. Francis and his mind tended more toward education than the founder of the Franciscans. For that reason his order developed more rapidly to the educational side. Dominic had his leaders trained and placed them in the main chairs in the educational centers. His idea was to teach the growing generation and, in so doing, the world would be won. Today we are awakening to the same fact in our religious work.

St. Dominic was educated by an uncle. At fourteen he was studying philosophy and theology. He soon became a distinguished student by devotion and charity. He sold his own books to help the poor. About 1203 he was taken on a commission to ask for a wife for the son of Alfonso VIII. The lady died before the party returned. The bishop, St. Diego, took Dominic



to Rome for a visit and then they started to Spain thru Southern France. Here the Albigenses were making a large display of their work. Dominic and Diego stopped and started their efforts here at Montpellier trying to convert the Albigenses back to the Church. Bishop Diego "urged that the heretics should be converted by the preaching of poor apostolic men, who should renounce all luxury." (Schaff-Herzog).

They started out two by two barefooted and without retinue to preach the Gospel. The work at first was difficult. St. Diego carried on the enterprise till 1207 when he died. St. Dominic became the leader and continued the work. His task was difficult but he worked faithfully, refusing many bishoprics. He received permission in 1217 to establish his new order which adopted the Augustinian rule. "The new brotherhood would thus be a society



not of monks, but of canons regular, with the special purpose of defending the faith and counter-acting heresy of preaching."

(Schaff-Herzog). This was not a full mendicant order. Communities could own property but individuals could not do so. The order was to have "no possessions except monastic buildings and churches, no property, no fixed income, but should live on charity and begging".

This order grew in Southern France, Northern Spain and Italy. It grew rapidly during the thirteenth century. Its centers were located at educational points such as the Universities of Paris, Rome, and Bologna. By the close of the thirteenth century they began to meet opposition from other orders. They decreased and their power began to wane. By the sixteenth century they had lost both their zeal and power. The new order of the Jesuits began to gain in power as the counter-Reformation move-



ment.

The order went into England and established a house at Oxford 1221. Here they were called the Black Friars. They commonly called themselves the Preaching Friars. "Together with the Franciscans they became the chief representatives of the theological science of the Middle Ages. They occupied a large number of the theological chairs of universities and became in, most controversies, not only the rivals but also the bitter opponents of the Franciscans". Not only in the educational field were they active but they were the most zealous laborers in the Foreign Mission fields of the Roman Church. They worked much among the Armenians, converting many.

The Dominicans from the beginning were devoted to study and the work of education. Dominic himself desired the salvation of souls by teaching the Word. His order is known by



the Friar Preachers. The great educational movements of the Franciscans and Dominicans started over a collision of the Civil and Religious authorities in the universities. From about 1228 the world-wide educational influence of these orders began. Albertus Magnus and his pupil, Thomas Aquinas, were claimed by the Dominicans as their greatest educators. Their educational work started first at the Universities of Paris, Cologne and Bologna. Later they entered practically every university in Europe, especially at Oxford, Dublin, and Louvian. Besides teaching they wrote much in all departments of knowledge. They were called pioneers of the Medieval Age in the critical study of the Scripture. Some of their scholars made elaborate studies from the original manuscripts and from the Fathers. They also compiled concordances and wrote translations. They studied



the Oriental languages and the original languages of the Bible. This study gave them a deep insight to the knowledge of the Bible. They studied and taught the History of the Church. "Popular education was not a special aim of the Dominicans except in so far as it may have been a necessary part of their apostolic mission" (Cycl. of Educ.)

These two great movements which were born in the time of rise of universities favored education. They did not aim at secular education as the ultimate goal but used it as a means to accomplish their religious goal. They spread their religious ideas thru-out Europe. With the universities themselves new and inexperienced, they allowed these orders to enter and occupy the chief seats of learning.

## V

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION

Enlightenment may be thrown upon the religious situation at the dawn of the Reformation by a rapid review of the past. For us to understand the actions of the people before the reformation it is necessary to know what they knew and learned.

The catechumenate and the catechetical schools were the earliest instruction of the Christians after the Apostolic times. They taught primarily the Scriptures by the question and answer method. The pupils were connected with the church. Many of these schools were established thru-out Christendom. They served for about five centuries.

The Cathedral and parochical schools came to be organized thru Bishop Chrodegange in the



eight century. The priests connected with the cathedral churches were formed into a monastic brotherhood. They established and conducted schools in which the instruction was about the same as in the convent schools. The parochial schools were organized in separate parishes under the priest. Their purpose was to teach the youth Christian doctrine in preparation for public worship, and to introduce him to Church membership. These schools were similar to the primitive Catechumenate schools.

There was little or no catechetical instruction from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries. Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. The thirst of the Church for world conquest grew so rapidly that they neglected the giving of training, except to the clergy.

Haslett remarks about the desire for the whole nation, "sword or cross, preaching or compulsion, no matter the means they must be gained."



Many efforts were made to stop this procedure but they were of no avail.

Charlemagne in the ninth century worked for education. He called Alcuin from England to come and supervise his schools. A system of secular and religious schools were established over his Empire. But it seems that only the higher classes of people received such training from these schools. Teachers were hard to be obtained. "When the Second Council of Chalons met in 813 and passed the decree ordering the bishops to establish schools in their dioceses, the actual dearth of educated persons capable of teaching was not known" (Haslett).

Many other efforts were made outside of the limited monastic orders to improve religious instruction but for the most part they failed.

Another one of the educational institutions of the Middle Ages was the Wandering Scholars. They were students going from one great teacher



to another. They gathered about them villagers and told their simple stories as they had heard it. In telling and teaching these villagers they would receive lodging. Their subject was religion. Cope said concerning the trend of that of the people at this time- "The Christian religion had become the leading subject of men's thoughts and divines had put forth its claims to be-- a philosophy in the widest sense in which the term is used."

From the fifth century to the Reformation the peculiar influence of the Church over education was in the direction of the asceticism. This was more emphasized by the monasteries. Religion was the all-absorbing subject of human thought and activity. The priesthood was elevated to a false importance. "Education was stamped with a theological bias that fettered it for ages"(Painter). The greatest political powers were brought under the influence of Christianity.



So one can see that religion was conquering humanity, but the trouble was that the spirit of war and compulsion together with popularity, was predominant rather than that of love and the teaching of Jesus.

The influence of monasticism can never be estimated. Their power for good and for evil remained. Monasticism started in the East and moved Westward with civilization. It was active in the West from about the sixth to the fourteenth century. "The particular occasion for its spread in the West was the development of the secular character of the Church and the worldly life of its communicants" (Monroe). Kemp said that monasticism early took a deep hold on Christendom. The two primary causes were first, the expectation of Christ to come; and second, the cruel oppression of the Roman Empire and the coarseness, sensuality and brutality that prevailed in it. The monastic



spirit was intensified and the number of monks increased by the terrible persecutions of the Roman Empire. The monastic conception of education was that education should be concerned not with literary matters but with the formation of moral and religious character alone. Yet "from the seventh to the opening of the thirteenth century there were practically no other education but that offered by the monks" (Monroe).

The monasteries were the only schools for the leading professional training, the only publishing houses, the only libraries for the preservation of learning. They produced the only schools, and were the sole institution of learning. Monasteries adopted the motto "Love the study of the Scriptures and you will not love vice". Their studies were almost limited to the Scriptures. Secular studies were dangerous to the life and caused heresies. During



many centuries they made no other educational provisions than that for religious training. This limited condition of education continued until about the thirteenth century. Any thing introduced that was not of the Church was condemned. This was possible because the "Church held supremacy over the state with authority unquestioned" (Seeley). This authority was also carried into the social, political and educational affairs to the extreme.

Five definite things the monasteries conferred upon civilization are:- (1) They preserved classical literature; (2) They kept alive the flickering flame of Christianity thru the Dark ages; (3) They maintained educational interest during the dark period; (4) They gave to education the Seven Liberal Arts; (5) They furnished places of refuge for the oppressed.

At the dawn of the reformation the political and social conditions of Europe were leading



to a great dissatisfaction. It was a period of unrest. England and France had engaged in the 100 years War. Germany was in turmoil about the election of the Emperor. Italy was in its old confusion. Spain was warring with the Moors. Dargan calls the two centuries before the reformation "a time of war, ambition, oppression, cruelty, intrigue, corruption and yet of far reaching significance in national affairs".

Religion had passed thru two and was closing with the third period of preaching. Popular preaching occupied the pulpit for a short period then Scholastic preaching came into practice from the learning of the universities. After the decline of these two, mysticism began its sway over the European pulpit. Thus Europe was filled at the dawn of the reformation with popular, scholastic and mystical thought in its religion.



The religious world was in turmoil. The old teaching was not satisfactory. A reform was needed and was being born in the hearts of believers. Men were rising and expressing a desire for a change. "The awful moral degradation into which the papacy fell during this time made it utterly unfit to contend against the forces of decay on the one hand and of reform on the other, and it is the conflict of this great period" (Dargan). The Catholic clergy was low in morals "Ignorance and incompetence were small faults in comparison with the moral unfitness which disgraced the clergy of the age" (Dargan). The priests of the church and the monks of the monasteries were alike. The nobility were lax also and the common people were far lower. Truly it was a time for a reform. A strong conviction was growing continually for a change. The selling of indulgences was producing a revival among those



that were oppressed. The printing press gave abundance to the number of the Bibles and parents began to teach their children in their homes.

Three of the great Reformers before the reformation were Wyclif, Huss, and Savonarola. Wyclif by his pen and mouth awoke the desire in England for a reform. His translation of the Scripture gave the Bible to the common people for them to read it themselves. His views were printed in tract form and circulated not only in England but in all Europe. He started his work by attacking the papacy; next he fell upon the clergy and lastly upon the Roman Doctrines. His work started an open defense of reform and many became his followers. John Huss, born in Bohemia, was a student of Prague when Wyclif's literature fell into his hands. At first he opposed the English Reformer's views but he was soon converted. Huss then



began with tongue and pen to attack the papacy and the corruptions of the church. "His place at least is assured in the ranks of real reformers, for he made the Scriptures the basis of his opposition to the papal perversions and he wavered not but sealed his testimony at the stake" (Dargan). Huss was a worthy follower of Wyclif and a worthy predecessor of Luther. Savonarola's work as a reformer may be summed up in his three famous prophecies: (1) The Church will be scourged. (2) It will be renewed and (3) All will come quickly. Therefore we can see the sunrise light before we can see the sun of the reformation proper. The world was being made ready for great leaders to come and inflame it so that those who were not permitted to see might look upon the glory of Christianity, and those that were not able to hear, might hear the teaching of salvation through Jesus Christ and not thru the Priest.



## CONCLUSION

The human being needs religion and must be taught it in the proper manner. Not only individuals but whole nations must be taught. The religion most suited for humanity is Christianity. Therefore, Christianity must be taught to the utter-most parts of the earth for the world to be saved. No religion has met the needs of the people like Christianity. It has failed only where improper methods have been used. The problem that the early disciples faced was how to teach Christianity in the most effective way. They sought to solve the problem in the ways known to them.

The Methods used first by the Apostles and the Catechumenate and Catechetical schools, were fitting for that period of Christianity. Facts needed to be explained. The application



could only be made after the facts were known. But it evolved into a too formal type of instruction. The principles were taught well but improperly connected to human experience. Yet thru it all Christianity was planted into the hearts of its followers so firmly that many were willing to suffer martyrdom for their faith.

Monasticism did not destroy the teaching of Christianity but limited it to those who would separate themselves from the public and withdraw to caves and monasteries. They walled in Christianity and dwarfed it. So Christianity did not grow to its full power thru the Dark Ages but grew only as a child in the home, housed in, but knowing nothing of the outside world. Even in the protected walls it became marred because of such practices as the monks established. Its spirit was crushed by the excessive details demanded. Not until



the eleventh century can we see the spirit of Christianity working in the outside world.

With the rise of universities and printing, Christianity took new wings. It was now taught outside the walls of the Roman Cathedrals and Monasteries. Chairs of theology were located practically in every university. New orders like the Dominicans and Franciscans spread it thru the common life. Then the printing press, just before the Reformation, spread the Christian message. The press made it possible for all who could read to study the Scriptures for themselves. These new wings carried Christianity away from the old formal and biassed Roman theology to the land of freedom in Protestantism.

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